

5 Method for Treating a Subject Suffering From Conditions
 Associated With an Extracellular Zinc Sphingomyelinase

10 Abstract of the Disclosure

15 The present invention provides for a method for treating a
 subject suffering from a condition associated with an
 extracellular zinc sphingomyelinase activity which comprises
 administering to the subject an amount of a zinc sphingomyelinase
20 inhibitor effective to decrease extracellular zinc
 sphingomyelinase activity in the subject and thereby treat the
 subject. The present invention also provides for a method for
 determining whether a compound inhibits an activity of an
 extracellular zinc sphingomyelinase involving ceramide formation
25 which comprises: (a) contacting a sample containing zinc
 sphingomyelinase under acidic pH conditions known to be
 associated with the activity of such zinc sphingomyelinase, with:
 (i) a substrate of the zinc sphingomyelinase enzyme, and (ii) the
 compound being evaluated; (b) measuring the ceramide in the
30 sample from (a); (c) determining the amount of zinc
 sphingomyelinase activity in the sample based on the
 concentration of ceramide measured in step (b); and (d) comparing
 the amount of sphingomyelinase activity determined in step (c)
 with the amount of sphingomyelinase activity determined in the
 absence of the compound, so as to determine whether the compound
 inhibits the activity of zinc sphingomyelinase.